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A PEACE PAGEANT WRITTEN AND ACTED BY THE UPPER GRADES

MILDRED WELD

Dramatization in secondary schools is rapidly securing a recognized place for itself among modern educators. But though it has received less recognition in the upper grades of the elementary school, dramatic work is well suited also to the needs and capacities of the child at this period of school life. It gives the child a hitherto unrecognized outlet of expression, which is as natural to the child's mind as speech itself; it stimulates his imagination and makes him take a lively interest in historic and literary personalities; it develops assurance in a naturally timid disposition, and it acts as a restraint upon the overbold; it affords a new field of work in composition; and it correlates with the work in art, music, and physical training, because costumes and stage-setting have to be considered, and music and dancing are often introduced.

The drama which follows was worked out in the eighth grade in a series of class exercises and presented before the other classes in the assembly hall of the school building. It was not executed with any attempt at finished acting, as only one week was given to learning the parts, arranging the costumes, and rehearsing the scenes. Had more time been given, the apparent result in presentation would have been improved; but the actual benefit to the class would have been little, if any, greater. Moreover, enthusiasm pales before prolonged work on any given exercise, and good results are diminished. The special aim in this case, aside from the general benefits mentioned above, was to interest the children vitally in the peace movement. This was certainly accomplished. and in addition other lines of interest were aroused. No child in that class will again pass lightly over references to feudal days, or costumes of that period; or the old forms of English expression, which we adopted for the sake of dignity; or articles in current

literature on world-peace. That is the far-reaching result which was accomplished and which made our work a success.

The problem before us at the outset was twofold: we must write a drama to be acted by fifteen girls and only five boys, a seemingly difficult thing to do; and we must select a different theme and work upon it in a different way from any that had been worked out in our building or in neighboring buildings. Our inspiration came from an address by Justice Brewer on "The Mission of the United States in the Cause of Peace." The idea of writing our drama in the form of a pageant with abstract characters sprang into being with the reading of this pamphlet, and one difficulty was solved. The other difficulty rapidly receded, for, although the peace pageant had been used among us, we had not heard of its being worked out in this way.

The first step was to make a working plan of the entire drama. which in this case was done by the teacher and presented to the class. The notion of abstract characters was hard for some of the pupils to grasp, and the historic allusions also puzzled some. A class discussion of the plan and explanation of difficulties involved followed, and many suggestions were made with regard to the subjectmatter for each scene. Books were suggested for helps in getting the historic setting; then the class divided itself into four groups to work on the four scenes of the first part. If any had a decided preference for a scene, he was put into the group which was in charge of that scene. In some cases pupils contributed to other scenes after the grouping was made, but considerable license was given in that regard. The first group used the Bible as a basis for its work; the second group used history stories; and the third and fourth groups used Scott's Ivanhoe, Howard Pyle's Men of Iron, and history reference books. It seemed more dignified to use the old-time "thee and thou" forms, so we searched the pages of Ivanhoe to find other expressions which might be appropriately used in the same text. Several passages from the text of Ivanhoe were incorporated in the first part of the pageant. We hereby make acknowledgment of that fact. The children went to work with a great deal of enthusiasm, for we even decided who should take some of the parts before we commenced to write and the parts

were really, in many cases, written to fit the characters. Needless to say, the original plan was modified in many respects after we commenced writing. These changes were due to suggestions by the children, to new ideas on the part of the teacher, and also to the requirements of the text as it was produced.

After the manuscripts came from the hands of the children, they were censored by a special committee and the best of each was taken to make up the first part of our drama. The teacher was always a member of the committee and did much to make the writing seem unified in the final result. The second part was then put into the hands of groups, with peace literature as a reading background, and the work was continued as in the first part. Although the construction progressed under the eyes of the children, many suggestions as well as many modifications of the writing were due directly to the work of the teacher. This must be borne constantly in mind. Many variations of the plot were suggested, but the one chosen seemed on the whole the most appropriate.

It may seem incongruous to have Truth a masculine character; but, as I said before, we wrote the drama for the children who took the parts and it fitted our character and our plot better to have it so. Several children who represented minor characters had to take two parts. The ancient nations in the first part became the modern nations in the second part, the lady of feudal days became the modern woman of the second part, but these changes did not seem inappropriate. The young children who represented the blessings in their first appearance were not in our presentation, but they could easily be taken from a lower class and trained for the dancing. They add lightness and grace to the whole effect and make the pageant seem more evenly balanced.

Each person provided himself with the names of the characters he represented printed in uniform black letters upon white muslin. This was at first our only plan for costuming, but gradually suggestions came in until simple but suggestive costumes were evolved at almost no expense. For example, War wore a helmet which he borrowed, and a doublet made of old black cambric decorated with silver paper; he carried a borrowed sword and a pasteboard shield of black and silver paper; Peace was gowned in white with a gold

paper crown; the New World was draped in a small silk United States flag that happened to be in our possession; the modern nations carried their own flags; and the nuns were draped in sheets. One can easily imagine from this the simple touches that completed the costuming of our caste.

The names of the parts and scenes were printed on large cards and displayed during the performance. The quotation from Lowell on the first page of our program was delivered for a prologue. Between the scenes we had music appropriate to the setting, martial music in the first part and a peace song at the end of the presentation, by the actors and the school. The stage management and the prompting were put into the hands of the children, so that they conducted their own performance. This gave them the additional lesson of meeting responsibility promptly and well.

The development of character in certainly three members of the class during the work on this drama was marked, and the other members of the class were not without its effect. The pleasure derived from witnessing such growth is in itself a recompense for the extra work that an undertaking of this sort entails.

Miss Helen Loeper, instructor in music at Calvin Fletcher School, arranged and assisted us with the music for the pageant, and Miss Ruth Stebbins, art assistant at Manual Training High School, contributed advice and assistance in the simple costuming employed.

PEACE PAGEANT

PRESENTED BY

THE 8 A CLASS OF CALVIN FLETCHER SCHOOL

Indianapolis, May 18, 1913

PLAN OF PEACE PAGEANT

PART I. DOMINATION of WAR.

Scene i: A Council of Ancient People Plan to Build the Tower of Babel.Scene ii: Tower of Babel Destroyed. Nations Aroused by the Spirit of War to Fight for Selfish Interests.

Scene iii: The Days of Chivalry, a Social and Political Institution of War. Scene iv: The Return of a Crusade, a Religious Institution of War.

PROPHECY.

PART II. DOMINATION OF PEACE.

Scene i: Promise of World-Peace.

Scene ii: Progress in Securing World-Peace.

Scene iii: Promise of Peace Fulfilled.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

PART I PART II Old World New World Three Nuns Her Handmaids: Palmer Democracy Ancient Nations: Education Assyria Modern Nations: Egypt United States India. France China Germany Babylonia Russia Phoenicia Holland Persia Italy

England

Lady of Feudal Days becomes Modern Woman
Business
Labor
Agents of
Fulfilment

Truth (hero)
Peace (heroine)
War (villain)
Justice
Religion

Blessings of Peace:

Art Progress Industry

PROLOGUE

New Occasions teach new duties, time makes ancient good uncouth; They must up again and onward who would keep abreast of truth!

PART THE FIRST

Scene i

Land of Shinar

[A group of primitive people, sitting on the ground and on rocks, assembled in council.]

First Person: Go to, let us make brick.

Second Person: Yea, we can use brick for stone and burn them thoroughly.

Third Person: And slime can serve for mortar.

Fourth Person: And of this brick will we build a city which shall be indestructible, and if rains come and floods destroy all the inhabitants of the earth, we shall be safe in our city, for it shall be placed upon a hill so high that the waters of the sea can never swallow it up and the floods of the earth can never reach it.

Fifth Person: For greater safety let us build in our city a tower whose top may reach unto heaven, and then we shall surely be safe from destruction.

Sixth Person: And we will call the tower Babel, and the city Babylonia, and it shall stand for a sign of our strength in ages yet unborn.

First Person: And the blessings of our work shall extend to all generations, and long may our name be praised!

Second Person: We will go forth to all the land around and select a site for our city, and we will begin this very day to make the bricks ready for the firing.

All: Away! Away!

Third Person: To find slime! Fourth Person: To make brick!

Fifth Person: To select a site for our city!

[Exeunt]

Scene ii

[Tower of Babel nearly completed. The same people as in scene i, laboring to carry heavy loads of brick and heave them up to their places on the tower. As several last bricks are added the earth shakes and the Old World shudders. A loud crash is heard and the tower is destroyed by an unseen power. The people run in terror, but, after the first shock, return as separate nations and cautiously inspect the ruins of their hopes.]

Egypt: All our hopes are dashed to the ground, and our beautiful tower exists no more. It is thy fault, improvident India! Behold the poor foundation!

India: Indeed, thou speakest falsely. Our beautiful tower would not have fallen had it not been for thee, who mixed the slime!

China: Methinks it is the fault of neither, but of those who laid the bricks which were not made aright.

Truth (enters and says): Oh, Nations, why must ye quarrel? You are stupid and know not the nature of this disaster. Your wickedness and evil ways have caused this calamity to fall upon you. Did ye not hope to rest secure in the product of your handiwork? Behold the ruins and turn from your evil ways, or worse than this may come upon you. It is not the fault of one, but of all. Cease thy fighting and understand the truth!

Phoenicia: Thy name is Truth, but thou knowest not what thou sayest, for surely we are not wicked. Did we not want to be closer to heaven? Certainly that is no base desire. Come, let us start afresh and build another tower, for 'twas but poor slime that caused the first to fall.

Egypt: It is not so. The poor foundation has occasioned this, as I have said before!

India: Tell no more falsehoods. Thou knowest what thou speakest is not true.

China: Why argue more? The same tower cannot be rebuilt. I speak for a new tower.

Persia: Who shall build it?

India: I shall not build the foundation!

Egypt: Nor shall I mix the slime!

Persia: Nor shall I make the brick!

China: Then must you all depart and leave this land to me. I can build a tower that will stand.

Babylonia: Methinks I should remain here, because I own the land on which the tower was built.

Phoenicia: But I am the most industrious and I hope to establish a trading-station on this spot.

Assyria: I am the strongest. Therefore I shall remain here.

Phoenicia: Thou shouldst for that very reason remove thyself and let the weaker nations stay to pursue in peace the arts of peace and secure the blessings of industry.

The others (in chorus): It is mine! It should belong to me! I was here first!

War (slips up to Babylonia): Tell them thou wilt fight. Thou art the strongest and I will help thee.

[Other nations talk together, and point to War and Babylonia, and continue their quarrel in an undertone.]

Babylonia: Thou dost make me brave. I will fight and with thy help I can but win.

War (shakes her hand): Bravely said, my friend. Maintain thy ground, for thou wast surely here first, as who can gainsay it? Call the boldest forth to contend the ground with thee.

Babylonia (turns and addresses the other nations): Come one, come all and prove by force of arms who has the right to remain.

War: Yea, might makes right. [Nations talk together.] Why do you hesitate? You seem to me like cowards and lily-livered milk-sops. Have you not as good a title to this land as Babylonia?

Persia: I am no coward. I will fight.

Nations in chorus: Nor I. Nor I.

Assyria: I will summon my soldiers and avenge myself on you, O hated Babylonia!

Egypt: I will also prepare for war.

Others: And I. And I.

[Exeunt Nations]

Old World (enters): What is this all about?

War: This is the beginning of the wrangling of Nations over points of honor that have to be settled by war. Thy boundaries will be rent asunder and thy lands laid waste, but how else can justice and honor be established

between the nations? I will help thee build thy armaments and spill the blood of thy children, but it is all for their honor and glory, and victory shall decide the right. Come, Old World, with me and prepare the Nations for War.

[Exeunt]

Scene iii

England-Age of Chivalry

[One Nun seated in English feudal castle. Two Nuns enter conversing.]

First Nun: Didst thou not say that this day the worthy Truth is to be knighted?

Second Nun: Yea, those are my very words, and worthy of being knighted is this gallant youth.

Third Nun: Forsooth he is, and thy words are truly spoken, for he is the first in honor as in arms.

Second Nun: Fain would be journey to the Holy Land and fight for the recovery of Jerusalem.

First Nun: Methinks I hear some one approaching. It is the sound of War. He is to make Truth a knight, Sister, if thy words are truly spoken.

[War enters with helmet, sword, and shield, followed by Palmer with Truth, who kneels in front of War. Nuns take candles and stand in a line in rear of group. Lady enters and sits opposite group.]

First Nun: A right comely youth is he!

Third Nun: Aye, and seemly too!

Old World (enters, dragging a heavy sword): By my beard, we need more knights!

War: Thou hast been gallant and brave, fair youth, and dost now deserve to be dubbed Knight. Thy good lance won the prize in this day's tourney and thou art accounted the victor. Bethink thee of the solemn vows thou art about to take. They are the knots which bind thee to heaven. They are the cords which bind thee and thy honor to the altar. Art thou ready to take them?

Truth: I am.

War: Wilt thou hereafter honor thy conscience as thy king, neither speak no evil—no, nor listen to it—preserve the truth, and defend the ladies?

Truth: By my troth, I will. [Takes up cross.] I vow before God to defend the church, to protect the ladies, to help the weak, and to succor all who are in need.

War (makes sign of cross on Truth's shoulder while giving him the following blessing]: In the name of God, I dub thee knight. Be brave, be bold, be loyal. Sir Truth, arise. There is no right of chivalry more precious or inalienable than that each knight choose a lady for whom to win honor. Is thy choice made? If not, it is now thy duty as well as privilege to name thy lady.

Truth (bends knee in front of Lady): Grant me thy favor, O lady fair, and give me a pledge of thy constancy. That necklace that thou wearest I fain would carry with me to give me strength in battle.

Lady: Nay, you may be a knight in rank but you are not yet a knight in deed. You have done naught in arms, you have won no fame. When your name is on all men's lips, return to me and I will grant you favor.

Truth: So be it. I will for thy sake venture my life in many battles. For thy sake I will win glory. No fear of death shall hinder me.

[Exeunt Truth followed by all except Old World and War]
[Enter Peace and Justice]

Justice: Didst witness the tournament yestreen? They say that the victor of the day was a coward who failed to vanquish his foe in fair fight, but took him unawares. In sooth, might is the right of the strongest.

Old World: Truth before his lance lies vanquished.

Justice: Indeed not. "Truth crushed to earth shall rise again."

Peace: And Justice shall prevail.

War (enters): What unprofitable debate is here? By my halidom, disperse ye all! Your prattle is ruinous to my projects. Out upon thee, I say, and thee, thou base calumniator!

[All scatter; curtain falls]

Scene iv

England

The Return of a Crusade

Truth: We have been exposed to great dangers by the road. Many of our number we have left in the land of the Saracens and the Crescent still waves over Jerusalem.

England: This holy pilgrim here, he surely has won honor for the church by his fastings and prayer.

Palmer: I bring as a sacred relic this portion of the true cross which I secured in the Holy Land. [Hands it to England.]

First Nun: We have said faithfully our orisons.

Second Nun: We have repented of our sins and mortified ourselves with fastings, vigils, and long prayers.

Third Nun: We have been subject to disease which has laid a heavy hand upon our strength and comeliness.

Old World: English chivalry was second to none. Many English knights won much honor, and some ran three courses, casting to the ground three antagonists.

Palmer: As Truth says, we have suffered much and left our offering of dead upon the battle-field. We have stood the trial, but our object has failed of its purpose. The flag of the Saracen still waves over the Holy Land.

Religion (enters): It is as true as truth itself that you have failed in your enterprise, because truth means this to me, and that to thee.

All: And what does it mean to thee, pray tell?

Religion: Service to all mankind.

Palmer: Have I not served? Nuns: Have we not served?

Old World: What more would you ask than that we offer our sons and daughters to thy service?

War: Have I not saved the honor of the church and protected the honor of thy knights in many a bravely fought battle-field?

Religion: Ah, good pilgrims, help the poor, succor the sick, and let your sons and daughters live to serve; and thou, O Truth, throw aside thy veil and see the light. Join the company of Peace and Justice and work for world-progress, forgetting not the Christmas message of "Peace on earth, good-will toward Men."

[Curtain]

[Religion steps in front of curtain and recites Ruskin's poem entitled "The Dawn of Peace." This partakes of the nature of a prophecy.]

PART THE SECOND

Scene i

America

New World: Behold my vast possessions, that extend to unknown limits beyond the setting sun! Here will I place thee, fair daughter Democracy, in charge of my people, and thou mayst train them as thou wilt.

Democracy: Well said, indeed! I shall employ as my chief helper the wisdom of Education. She shall train thy people to know that all mankind are brothers, and that Justice cannot be established by War.

Education: I will raise great men who shall be an honor to their New World home. Through them shall the Spirit of War be overcome and a better way of settling difficulties be set forth.

War (enters): Thou canst not settle questions of honor without my help. Thou knowest that. Already have I helped thee establish thyself upon this virgin soil and now thou wouldst cast me off and forget the one who befriended thee.

Education: There are those who think thy help might have been dispensed with. Recall the words of him who was first in war and first in peace. He said, "My first wish is to see the inhabitants of the whole world at peace, striving which should contribute most to the happiness of mankind."

Democracy: Our brethren dwell in every land, for we ourselves have but recently come to cast our lot with thee, our new-found Fatherland. We are through with thy service, most bloody-handed War!

Truth: Begone, old War. Thy day is past; thy sun is set. Even I, thy former friend, have no further use for thee.

Peace: And from now on thou shalt be spurned by all civilized nations.

War: I am not old, I tell thee! If I am spurned by all civilized nations I will get all uncivilized nations and make war upon thee!

[Exit War]

Peace: Education, get thee all of the uncivilized nations and teach them the truth of service. That is the only way of overcoming War.

Education: Yea, that will I do.

[Exit Education]

[Enter England, France, and Germany running]

New World: What now? Why are you running? Hast someone frightened you?

Nations: War has been at our heels. We can no longer avoid him.

War (enters): Ye, who dare, come fight the mighty War!

Truth: O, War, why must thou always fight? Why canst thou not let the nations rest at peace with one another? Thou filled the Old World so full of thy dread spirit that it was made weak and inefficient and needs must do as thou commanded. Pray leave the New World to go about in peace.

War: List to the coward. If he were brave, he would not speak these foolish words. Is there no one left to fight? Come, Nations, build more warships and vie with one another!

New World: We'll have no fighting here. Begone, I tell thee, and let me see thy face no more! [Exit War.] For the last time have we soiled our hands in thy bloody business!

[Curtain]

Scene ii

New World: Thrice have we fallen into conflict—to our shame be it spoken! Our parent country has been our foe and even our brethren of the South. Our daughters have scraped lint and made bandages, have nursed the wounded and buried the dead; lands have been laid waste in this fair world of promise; and waters have run red with blood! O Justice, why hast thou deserted us? O Peace, canst thou endure our sight no more?

Justice: Thou deservest no better at our hands. All men are thy brethren. Thou shouldst but remember that! Settle thy difficulties fairly between thee and thy kindred. Then we will once more dwell in thy borders and comfort thy broken-hearted daughters with a clear vision of the future, unstained by kinsmen's blood.

Peace: Indeed I, too, will bless thee in manners manifold. My blessings shall rejoice thy youth and thou shalt become powerful through them in thine age. [Sings:]

Hither, come hither, blessings three, Dance a roundelay merrily, Progress, Art, and Industry Meet with us together. Blessings (enter dancing and encircle Peace):

Here we come, O Peace, to thee, Dance we here right joyfully; Here we always fain would be Thy dear children ever!

[They encircle New World, still dancing]

May we not thy blessings be,
O New World? For thee we see
A distant sure prosperity,
Thine and ours together!

[They encircle Justice]

Justice, too, our patron see. Peace, she always follows thee Wheresoever thou mayst be; None thy bonds may sever.

[Dancing forward and backward]
Hither come, and hither gone,
Dance a step and sing a song,
Shall we wander far and long
Or stay here forever?

New World: We have entertained you many times in our midst, fair children, and tried to protect your youth and innocence, but War has each time banished you by his inroads until we despaired of seeing you more. Welcome, thrice welcome, are you to our land! Establish yourselves where you will; live and grow up in the strength of this new soil until War blanches before the face of Industry and flees from the approach of Progress. War has been entertained in our midst for the last time! [Exeunt Blessings.] [To Peace:] We have established the only unguarded boundary line in the civilized world and it has remained unmolested for a century of peace. Surely that is something to win your favor?

[Enter Business and Labor. Labor with sleeves rolled up begins to hammer away at a piece of work.]

Peace: I congratulate you upon that endeavor to win my esteem and I pledge my assistance in securing for you further advantages. I have just returned from South America and rejoice to tell you that I have left my standard upon the boundary line between Chile and Argentina, for both nations, after years of conflict, have sold their warships, disbanded their armies, and entered into an enduring peace.

[Enter Woman, who sits sewing]

New World: I have agents at work to secure a public sentiment in favor of Peace. Business, what has thou done to promote our interests?

Business (at a desk piled with accounts): I have helped the New World make treaties and maintain peaceful relations with the other countries. Our interests are so bound up with theirs that no war could be successfully carried on. Business would never permit it.

New World: And thou, mine honest workingman, what hast thou to say for thyself?

Labor: I am restless and discontented. Why? Because I know that 70 per cent of the revenue of the country—taxes that I pay and taxes that you pay—is spent for the war debt and to buy more implements of war. Thirty cents out of every dollar remain to promote the life and welfare of the citizens, seventy cents to destroy life and to destroy property. How much longer shall we endure this outrage?

Woman: I, too, feel strongly in this matter. Who makes up the rank and file of the army? Let me answer for you. The husbands and sons of the laboring class. Again, who cares for the dependent family at home? Aye, who? Answer me ye who can. [Pause.] The child that looks into my eyes may one day lie on a bloody field of battle. Is it for this I have toiled and suffered—only to see the son of my hopes snatched from his rightful place in the world of service?

Justice: Behold, a brighter future is before us. I have established the Hague Tribunal of World Peace. In it can all controversies between nations be settled without recourse to war.

All: To the Hague! To the Hague!

[Exeunt all]

Scene iii

[Modern Nations and Old World in background with flags. Enter coronation procession, New World escorting Peace, followed by Truth and Justice, Religion, Industry, Progress, and Art. New World crowns Peace. Procession and Nations sing:]

All hail, most gracious queen, to thee! Thy loyal subjects we shall be From now until eternity! All hail to thee! All hail to thee!

[New World steps back of throne. Truth and Justice take places on opposite sides of throne; Religion sits at the feet of Peace, and the Blessings, now grown to womanhood, group themselves on the opposite side of the stage.]

Truth: Fair sister, today we grant the homage that should have been thine these many years. I groped in darkness, not knowing where I erred, and associated myself with War because I was blinded by tradition and the false standard of religion. Today the scales have fallen from my eyes and I see clearly the new vision of the future!

Justice: I, too, crown thee queen of all the earth and pledge myself thine honored slave.

Religion: Today has the ancient prophecy come true which said, "And they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall there be war any more."

Peace: As thy chosen queen, I hope to serve thee well. I appoint for my chief counselors, Truth and Justice. [*Both bow.*] And as my first duty to you all I bid you summon War to a hearing.

[Exit Truth, returning with War]

Peace: War, thou art my prisoner. Hereafter thou art banished from all people forever and may henceforth wander a fugitive without friend and without comrade. No person may be seen associating with thee, and thy days may be spent in atonement for thy heedless fighting and slaying.

Truth: Be not so hard upon friend War. We have often fought side by side. I entreat you, reconsider your sentence.

Peace: Then disarm War and replace his weapons with those of Industry. If he will never arm himself again with destructive weapons, he may remain among us a friend and comrade. His wealth must be given to Progress and his time to Art and he may then prove himself a valuable citizen in the world community.

Industry: I bestow upon thee these gifts. [Hands him a spade and a sickle.]

War: I relinquish my gold and promise to devote myself to Art. [Steps to her side.] May I have the honor of thy favor?

Art: Thy career is before thee. Do with it as thou wilt. [Accepts the gold.]

Peace: Behold my Blessings. Call them hither. [War steps to rear of stage. Blessings come forward.]

Peace: Go forth to bless all the nations until

"The workers afield, in the mill, in the mart, In commerce, in council, in science and art Shall bring of their gifts and together create The manifold life of the firm-builded state."

[Peace song by actors and audience]